

## Food Poisoning Dangers

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 76 million Americans are affected by food poisoning or other foodborne illnesses every year. Of that number, more than 300,000 end up hospitalized and around 5,000 die as a result of their exposure. While anyone can get food poisoning, pregnant women, the very young and the elderly are most likely to suffer the most serious consequences.

### Types of Food Poisoning

There are more than 250 known foodborne diseases. The most common types of food poisoning occur when someone eats food that contains E.coli, salmonella, listeria, types of bacteria or when they are exposed to a virus, such as norovirus.

### Symptoms, Recovery and Possible Long-term Effects

Depending on the type of food poisoning and the health of the sufferer, the usual symptoms—upset stomach, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach cramps, overall weakness and dehydration—may appear anywhere from a few hours to a few days after eating tainted or contaminated food.

Most of those who are exposed to a foodborne illness recover in a few days; however, some victims, especially those exposed to E.coli, can suffer much longer lasting complications, including kidney damage.

It is also possible to acquire Hepatitis A from food that has been handled by someone who already has that disease, but symptoms may not appear for weeks, making it difficult to trace the source of the infection.

A listeria infection can lead to meningitis, an inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain, as well as mental retardation, seizures, paralysis, blindness and deafness among newborn infants.

### Resources

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases: [www.niaid.nih.gov](http://www.niaid.nih.gov)

FoodSafety.gov: [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration: [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

### Additional Information

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